



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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PRESS RELEASE

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Connecticut Celebrates “June is Dairy Month”

Hartford, CT—What is your first thought when you hear the word “dairy?” Perhaps it is an ice-cold glass of milk that washes down still-warm homemade cookies. Maybe it is your favorite flavor of ice cream on a hot summer afternoon, or that yummy cheese on top of America’s all-time favorite party food, pizza. For the less food-conscious, it may bring to mind bucolic, rolling green fields decorated with red barns and black and white cows.

Dairy is all of these things and much more. To help raise awareness of all that dairy has to offer, and to celebrate its importance to our health and to our state’s economy, Connecticut is celebrating “June is Dairy Month.”

Connecticut farms contribute \$2.2 billion to our state’s economy every year, according to Working Lands Alliance (www.workinglandsalliance.org). Over half of the state’s 357,000 acres of farmland are used for dairy or dairy support operations.

“Dairy farms have a huge visual impact on the landscape of our state and are a very important part of what makes Connecticut unique,” says Robin Chesmer of The Farmer’s Cow Fresh Connecticut Milk. “Plus a lot of money passes through the hands of agriculture directly into the states economy. And most importantly, Connecticut’s dairy farms are a great source of fresh locally produced milk and dairy products. When it is local, it just doesn’t get any fresher!”

“The 169 dairy farms in Connecticut produce more than 45 million gallons of milk annually,” notes F. Philip Prelli, Commissioner of Agriculture. “They are an important and vital part of our agricultural family.”

Connecticut dairy farms offer something for everyone. In addition to whole, lowfat, and nonfat milks—along with the myriad of cheeses, ice creams, and other products made from them—one can find lactose-free, organic, and raw varieties. For those looking for something different, there are sheep’s milk, goat’s milk and their products.

Though dairy products lost some popularity during the low-fat diet craze, recent studies have indicated that dairy products are not only healthful, but that a reduced-calorie diet plentiful in dairy products can actually help dieters lose more body fat than a dairy-scarce diet of the same caloric levels (source: National Dairy Council, www.nationaldairycouncil.org).

In addition, lowfat dairy products are rich sources of calcium, which helps prevent osteoporosis, and they supply eight other essential nutrients, making them a great choice for anyone concerned about healthy eating. The USDA recommends that individuals on a standard 2,000-calorie-per-day diet consume three cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products. They point out that although calcium-fortified foods such as orange juice and soy beverages do provide calcium, they may lack the other nutrients found in dairy products (www.mypyramid.gov).

Many of our state’s dairy farms welcome visitors and some even give tours. An increasing number are offering a wide variety of products for sale right at the farm. For a list of diversified dairy farms in Connecticut, visit the state Department of Agriculture’s website at www.ct.gov/doag/ and click on “Publications” and then “Diversified Dairy Farms. ”

A special Connecticut Open House Day Farm Tour is being hosted by the Farmer’s Cow on June 10 at Graywall Farms in Lebanon, CT. For more information, visit www.thefarmerscow.com or call 866-355-2697.

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